



SOUTHEAST NEWS

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Merry Christmas! Happy New Year!

He was Light

Coming into a
world of darkness.

He was Love

Coming into a
world of hate.

He was Life

Coming into a
world of corruption.

He was Peace

Coming into a
world of strife.

He was Bread

Coming into a
world of hunger.

He was Water

Coming into a
world of thirst.

He was Righteousness

Coming into a
world of sin.

He was Hope

Coming into a
world of defeat.

He was God

Coming into a

world of humanity!

"For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given."

Isaiah 9:6

Edwin Mehlhaff

Nan Wright

Betty Ann Daniell

Dick Sales

Mitchell Johnson

Adrienne Laraway

Shirley Bowen

Mitzi Rothman

Faith and Courage in Angola

"Nda ha Suku nda sia kaile lomenyo etaili." "If it weren't for God, I wouldn't be alive today." said friend after friend during my visit to war-torn Angola in May and June. I was there on a visit of solidarity and witness sent by the Joint Ministry in Africa of our United Church Board for World Ministries and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Division of Overseas Ministries at the invitation of our partner church, the Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola (IECA), and the Council of Christian Churches in Angola (CICA).

I had been evacuated from Angola in 1975 and since then our brothers and sisters have endured all the horrors of war—with over 500,000 dead, millions uprooted, families separated, hundreds of thousands wounded or maimed including 70,000 amputees—most from land mines, and there are still 10-15,000,000 unexploded land mines making travel or farming hazardous.

But in the midst of all the suffering, I found deep faith and courage. The church has continued its ministry even in the most dangerous times and places, and has grown and spread. As people were uprooted by the war and fled for their lives, they took the Gospel with them to the farthest corners of the country and, in exile, into neighboring countries.

Our partner church, the Evangelical Congregational Church, was begun by Congregational missionaries in 1880 and has now grown to nearly 700,000 members.

I was the first UCC missionary sent back in many years and it was a joyous reunion for us all ... with lots of hugs and tears! My visit was seen as a sign of hope for the church, a sign that peace has indeed begun. On Pentecost Sunday I preached to 10,300 gathered together in the city of Huambo with a huge banner that proclaimed in Umbundu and Portuguese, "Pentecost of Reconciliation, Solidarity and Peace."

A fragile peace has begun, with great praise due the United Nations for their peacekeeping efforts and their massive humanitarian program. There is so much work to do, with so much destruction. Folks asked over and over again for us to keep praying and to pressure our government to monitor and encourage the peace process. (And we need to urge our senators and representatives to support the Land Mine Moratorium Act – S940 and HR 1876).

"God gives us the gift of forgetting the horrors we've seen; otherwise we'd go crazy."

"It's only the will of God that you found any of us alive."

"War is dehumanizing ... Forgiveness is the only word the church has."

Joyce Myers-Brown: "I heard in Bailundo about a parent who asked his son what he wanted to be, and the response was, 'Alive. I want to be alive, Daddy.'"

In spite of all the suffering, my dominant impression of the Angolan people was one of hope, and even of joy. People praised God for the new day, and pastors and people spoke of forgiveness and reconciliation. The human spirit is amazing, but more importantly, God is great. Pandu, pandu ku Suku! Thanks be to God!

Rev. Joyce Myers-Brown

Note: Joyce is available to speak at your worship or other functions/programs.

Make a Difference Campaign

Want to be a part of a success story?

Then join the Southeast Conference Make a Difference effort. As of August 24, 1995, the Southeast Conference individuals and churches have pledged a total of \$274,411 to the Make a Difference Campaign! Note that our basic goal was \$150,000 and our challenge goal was \$250,000. We have exceeded our basic goal by \$124,000—110% of that goal. *THANKS TO ALL WHO PLEDGED!!!* We will receive about \$60,000 back as our share plus support for program proposal requests we send to the National Office. Funds will begin flowing back to the Conference in 1996!

NOTE: the Board of Directors has voted to close the Campaign by December 31, 1995. However, any church that has planned or is wanting to plan a drive in 1996, will have the assistance of the Conference in that endeavor.

Please respond to this final invitation to participate in a success story!!!

CONFERENCE COMMENTS:

ED-ITORIAL

Christmas is a special season for letting the spirit soar. We are lifted up and enlivened by the Christmas stories, allegories, images and metaphors more than by its logic! We will miss Christmas if we reduce it to a cerebral season only!

The Christian faith's loftiness and earthiness is vividly depicted by a vignette which comes out of my parish in Kansas. We "filmed" the Christmas Story on a farm, using as the acting cast our Church School children. An eight-year-old costumed as an angel (white robe, glittered wings, halo, appearing facially truly angelic) was photographed after she had stepped in cow doo-doo and with foot raised for scraping on the manger, she exhibited a facial expression that said it all ... Head in the stars, feet in the manure ... with a priceless heart in between, connecting the lofty and the mundane, eternal and temporal, that's the message of Christmas.

The “Control Syndrome”

The longer I live ... the older I get ... the more I am convinced that a basic and prominent drive of our humanity is what emerges too often as our inordinate need to exercise “control” over others. It never ceases to be startling how we use position and status to effect this orientation. Parents at times do it over children, teachers do it over students, board members do it over constituents as well as one another, chairpersons do it over committee members, and ministers do it over other members of the church. In this process it has become clear enough to me that there is a noticeable difference between being “somebody” and being “somebody’s boss”!

I had a bit of trouble some few years ago with one of our children trying to fully qualify for a regular automobile driver’s license. Since she had only her learner’s permit, I was obligated to ride with her as she drove through the “rat race” of routine traffic. There was the penchant to yell and scream at other drivers about their minor infractions that bothered her. From the passenger seat next to her, I endured the name calling of others who, in her mind, were less than perfect in their driving skills. It dawned on me that what this beloved child driver needed to learn was simple. One just cannot drive everyone else’s car from behind one’s own steering wheel. In fact, a habitual preoccupation with bad drivers of other vehicles can endanger your own safety. Good or effective driving is seen by the example of those who drive as safely and thoughtfully as they can, one car at a time. Self-righteousness behind the steering wheel of one’s car, behind the desk at one’s office or school, in one’s swivel chair around the boardroom conference table, or in the church or home has been and will continue to be an ineffective leadership style or orientation.

When Paul addressed the beloved friends at his new church in Corinth, he was responding to the “control” syndrome he saw at work among some of its members. Some evidently had made strong attacks against him for whatever reason. In his letter to them, he shows deep longing for reconciliation and expresses great joy when this is brought about. The summation of this comes in his memorable acclamation following a review of all their problems including his own. “The love of

Christ controls us!" All this is done, he says, by God who, through Christ, changed us from enemies into his friends and gave us the task of making others his friends also. II Cor. 5:14ff. This continues to be our primary job.

Mitchell C. Johnson
Associate Conference Minister

Happy Thanksliving! Thanksgiving ... ThanksLiving!

A grateful heart overflows with grateful works. A heart beating with gratitude is rich in thanksgiving!

The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 75:1, "We give thanks to thee, O God; we give thanks; we call on your name and recount your wondrous deeds." Psalm 105:1 adds, "O give thanks to the Lord, call on God's name, make known God's deeds among the peoples!" Psalm 107:1 reminds us, "O give thanks to God, for God is good; for God's steadfast love endures forever!" This refrain is repeated by the Psalmist again and again.

What is the shape of a person's life who has a thankful heart? Perhaps it is characterized with an attitude and being that sees life as good, sees people and nature's creation as gifts of God to make our lives joyous, to use people and creation creatively and not abusively, to touch life with a smile, a cheery word, an uplifting deed; upbuilding life with one's presence. I invite you this Thanksgiving Season to say thanks, do thanks, be thanks and to "pray without ceasing."

Take Time To Pray

Giving Thanks ...

God, thank you for the gift of life

for each new day

for tasks to do

for people to serve

God, thank you for the Southeast Conference

for 74 congregations

for the faithful pastors

for dedicated laity

God, thank you for our congregation

*for those who lead
for those who follow
for those who give of themselves
God, thank you for having a mission
for sharing our love
for sharing our time
for sharing our talents
for sharing our money
God, thank you for your grace and bounty
for more than enough food
for home and family
for creation's beauty and gifts
God, thank you for Jesus Christ
for His plain teachings
for His exemplary love
for our new way of being
God, thank you for giving us everything
for being made by you
for living for you
for trusting your leading
God, thank you for helping me believe in you
for now I lack nothing
for I am yours
for ever!
Amen!*

Ed Mehlhaff

Report of Southern Regional Women's Meeting

The Southern Regional Meeting of United Church of Christ Women went to the mountain at Blowing Rock, North Carolina, and have now returned refreshed to serve in the valley and cities. In addition to the majestic setting of the UCC Assembly Grounds, other inspiration came through the words of Rev. Dr. Mary Susan Gast. She challenged us to

receive the power of the Holy Spirit, not for control or authority over others, but rather to express ourselves with intensity to author, amplify and harmonize our own lives as we are led by the winds of the Spirit.

The eleven workshops gave us the opportunity to explore our own interests. Some outstanding moments came through the workshop led by Lee Mahan Evans who had just returned from Beijing. The United Church of Christ had 32 delegates there under the umbrella of Church Women United! We also had great fun on Saturday evening at the Pig Pickuns as we ate and listened to band music, an octet, storytellers, etc.

The Silent Auction netted \$1,400, seed money for the next assembly to be held September 26-28, 1997 at Blowing Rock, NC. An inspirational presentation of the plight of migrant workers (mostly legal aliens and Hispanics) whose average yearly income is \$7,500, prompted a donation of \$1,348.21 for the Farm Workers' Ministry in North Carolina.

There were 261 women in attendance. SEC was represented by 54 women: from East Alabama and West Georgia, 17 women from 6 churches; from Georgia-South Carolina, 18 women from 3 churches; from Alabama-Tennessee, 19 women from 7 churches. All agreed they had a great time!

Winn Welch, Crossville, TN

Life in a Small Town

A little town is where everybody knows what everybody else is doing but they read the weekly newspaper to see who got caught at it.

In a little town everybody knows every neighbor's car by sight and most by sound and also knows when it comes and where it goes.

In a little town there's no use anyone lying about his age or his ailments or exaggerating about his ancestors or his offspring. A little town is where if you get the wrong number, you can talk for 15 minutes anyway, if you want to. A little town is where there's hardly anything to do, yet never enough time to do it.

In any town the ratio of good people to bad is about 100 to 1. In a big town the 100 are uncomfortable. In a little town the 1 is. A little town is where businessmen struggle for survival against suburban shopping

centers. Where they dig deep to support anybody's worthy cause, though they know anybody shops mostly at the big city stores.

Small town gossips tend to cut down anybody who's up and help up anybody who's down. The small town policeman has a FIRST name.

The small town schoolteacher has the last word. The small town preacher is a full-time traveler. And the small town firemen take turns. Why would anybody want to live in one those little tiny “blink and you miss it” towns! I don’t know.

Maybe because in the class play there's a part for everybody. In the town jail there's rarely anybody, and even in the town cemetery, you're still among friends.

All-Clergy Conversation Gatherings

The next Clergy Conversation Gatherings will be as follows:

Dec. 4, 7-9 p.m., Andalusia First

Dec. 6, 6:30-9 p.m., Lanett Congregational

Dec. 20, 6:30-9 p.m., Nashville Brookmeade

Jan. 3, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Birmingham Pilgrim

Jan. 10, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Chattanooga Pilgrim

Put the one you wish to attend on your calendar now. Bring a sack lunch and let's share joys, cares, concerns with one another.

Love and Peace,
Ed Mehlhaff

Tithing

TITHING – A giving of the first fruits of your labors! It is a response to God's constant grace which knows only one season – the season of giving. We can stop giving when God stops giving!

FAITH – *As one's faith grows, so does one's generosity!*

WOULD YOU MAKE THIS YOUR GROWTH CHART?

[illegible]

The case against tithing has many advocates. Tithing has been maligned as legalism, cold-hearted mechanical behavior, a case against proportionate giving, Old Testamentish, a fundamentalist style limited one's giving, on and on and on.

The case for tithing, sparingly supported by the Christian Church Universal, far exceeds our complaints against. It is first of all, a discipline for the giving of our financial assets—cash income and all other forms of holdings. It is an equitable floor for our giving. As someone appropriately said, "When we've tithed, real giving begins over and above the 10%." We give according to the richness of our faith and in accord with how richly we have been blest. I truly believe that the depth of a person's faith is measured by one's giving.

There are other good reasons for tithing. If we would all tithe, the local church would not have to have an annual financial enlistment! The income of the church would have a solid base, and each year as one's personal income increases, so would the church's income increase!

Furthermore, tithing expresses a continuum of faith. To re-pledge each year gives faith a peculiar tilt of tenuousness. It seems to suggest that faith in God and the Church is renegotiated annually—as though God and the Church were constantly on probation.

General Synod has called us to become a tithing denomination. The UCC is presently giving at a level of less than two percent of income. Imagine what ministries our congregations and the whole United Church of Christ could perform if we were tithers!

So, I invite and challenge you to become a tithing people. Begin by adding no less than 1% to your present giving until you reach and exceed the 10% level. Could the Southeast Conference become the first Conference in which all its churches were tithing congregations?

It is my belief that society would take us more seriously if we showed that kind of commitment to the Church of Jesus Christ and propagation of His Gospel!

There could be some tithing surprises:

- 1) At the amount of money a person has for the Lord's work.
- 2) At the deepening of one's spiritual life. One's faith is lifted.
- 3) At the ease in meeting one's own obligations with the remaining nine-tenths.

- 4) At the east in going from one-tenth to a large percentage.
- 5) At the preparation this gives to be a faithful and wise steward over the nine-tenths remaining.
- 6) At oneself for not adopting the plan sooner!
- 7) At the new ministries your tithe empowers.

So, why not be a tither?

Ed Mehlhaff
Interim Conference Minister

OCWM GIVING LAST QUARTER & YEAR TO DATE

	July-August	Total 1995
ALABAMA-TENNESEE ASSN.		
Alpine, King's Chapel	200.00	359.00
Athens, Trinity	.00	.00
Belvidere, 1st UC	1,494.11	4,895.11
Birmingham, 1st CC	2,000.00	4,000.00
Birmingham, Pilgrim	1,350.00	4,050.00
Chattanooga, 1st CC	.00	.00
Chattanooga, Pilgrim	2,195.00	8,779.33
Chattanooga, Sheares	.00	.00
Crossville, UCC, UCWF	35.00	335.00
Crossville, UCC	750.00	2,309.75
Cullman, St. John's	2,700.00	6,075.00
Deer Lodge, Congregational	300.00	900.00
Fairfield Glade, CC	925.00	2,775.00
Garden City, CCC	115.50	346.50
Glenmary, CCC	.00	.00
Hanceville, Mountain Grove	.00	.00
Huntsville, United Church	1,800.00	5,400.00
Knoxville, Church of the Savior	.00	.00
Marion, 1st Congregational	.00	.00
Montgomery, First	.00	.00
Nashville, 1st UC	1,250.01	3,750.03

Nashville, Brookmeade	230.25	702.75
Nashville, Howard	600.00	600.00
Pleasant Hill, Community Church	4,125.00	12,375.00
Robbins, Barton Chapel	.00	.00
Sweetwater, First	.00	250.00
Talladega, First	.00	100.00
Tougaloo, Union UCC	.00	.00
Waverly, UCC	.00	80.00
	20,069.87	58,082.47

EAST AL/W GA ASSN.

Alex City, First	.00	.00
Columbus, United	.00	.00
Dadeville, Elder	.00	.00
East Tallassee, CC	195.00	295.00
Eclectic, Watson's Chapel	.00	.00
Five Points, State Line	.00	.00
LaFayette, Pleasant Grove	.00	788.00
LaGrange, Hillside	.00	.00
LaGrange, United	.00	499.00
Lanett	542.00	1,792.00
Langdale	.00	.00
Phenix City, Russell Woods	.00	760.00
Pine Forest	.00	.00
Pine Mountain, Oak Grove	.00	600.00
Roanoke, Antioch	.00	570.00
Roanoke, Bethany	.00	.00
Roanoke, Forest Home	.00	.00
Roanoke, New Hope	50.00	620.00
Roanoke, North Main	380.00	760.00
Roanoke, Rock Stand	.00	.00
Valley, Todd Congregational	.00	.00
Wadley, Corinth Christian	119.00	238.00
Wedowee, Noon Day	.00	.00
West Point, Bethel	.00	.00
Woodbury, Jones Chapel	474.00	1,659.00

	1,760.00	9,136.00
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GA/SC ASSN.

Atlanta, Central	6,894.99	20,684.97
Atlanta, First	976.79	1,719.84
Atlanta, Rush	.00	.00
Atlanta, Southwest	.00	.00
Atlanta, UCC	.00	.00
Beachton, Evergreen Congregational	.00	.00
Buford, Duncan's Creek	.00	.00
Center Congregational	.00	.00
Central Congregational Women	.00	200.00
Charleston, Circular	666.66	2,666.64
Charleston, Plymouth	1,500.00	1,500.00
Columbia, Fellowship	100.00	125.00
Demorest, Federated	118.06	236.12
Dewy Rose, Liberty	.00	.00
GA-SC Association	.00	.00
Jonesboro, Trinity	10.00	1,885.00
Marietta, Amistad	1,000.00	1,000.00
Marietta, Pilgrimage	.00	2,750.00
Midway, Congregational	200.00	400.00
Savannah, First	400.00	1,400.00
Thomasville, Bethany	.00	.00
	11,866.50	34,567.57

S. ALA/N.W. FLA ASSN.

Andalusia, Antioch	500.00	500.00
Andalusia, First CC	220.00	495.00
Baker, Good Hope	.00	.00
Baker, Pyron	.00	.00
Bonifay, New Effort	.00	.00
Brantley, Indian Creek	.00	.00
Brantley, Liberty	100.00	300.00
Clio, New Hope	.00	.00
	820.00	1,295.00

Morgan-Scott Work Project

The week of June 12, 1995, representatives of the Iowa Conference and the Southeast Conference met just outside Deer Lodge, Tennessee. Our mission: to do whatever Mrs. Meta Potter, Director of the Morgan-Scott Project for Cooperative Christian Concerns, needed for us to do.

Morgan-Scott Project (MSP) provides a base for churches and individuals to offer assistance in two north Tennessee counties where 29% of families live below the poverty line.

Our crew hailed from the states of Iowa, Tennessee and Georgia. Three Iowa churches were represented: Trinity UCC, Hartley; Phoenix UCC, Ottumwa; and Eden UCC, Cedar Rapids. The Southeast was also represented by three churches: Pleasant Hill Community Church UCC, Pleasant Hill, TN; United Christian Church UCC/DOC, Crossville, TN; and First Congregational Church UCC, Atlanta, GA.

Each came bearing "gifts," the most important of which was a willing, cooperative spirit. Some brought funds, other brought produce from their gardens; some shared their tools or a 15-passenger church van (answering to the name "Big Yellow Van"); and some offered their special gift for table fellowship. Every one came with an endless supply of energy (well, almost endless).

Mrs. Potter assigned our crew to several projects right away. Willing workers found others to take on. By week's end, at least six porches bore the stamp of the carpentry skills of this ambitious band. Moreover, the MSP compound got some cleaning and painting, and underwent an "organizing" such as can only be imagined in the UCC. And every one of us was a wee bit more corpulent for God's bounty and gracious ministrations of those who saw to our care and feeding.

Housed in the Project office, we slept wherever we could get a comfortable spot. Our daily devotions brought to remembrance the faithfulness, goodness and abundant love of God. We lifted our voices in songs of praise and thanksgiving, and in working and sharing together, came to understand and learn from one another. From town churches, country churches and house churches, we came as clergy and laity, leaders and followers ... all trusting God to give the increase.

We will walk with each other,
We will walk hand in hand.
We will work with each other,
We will work side by side.
And they'll know we are Christians by our love.

Those who participated were:

Barry and Carol Barnes, Ottumwa, IA
Dick Braun, Pleasant Hill, TN
Elizabeth Clement, Atlanta, GA
Merlyn and Evelyn Feddersen, Hartley, IA
Ralph Galt, Pleasant Hill, TN
Joseph and Ruth Gyorke, Pleasant Hill, TN
Lois King, Pleasant Hill, TN
Johanna Knapp, Cedar Rapids, IA
Charlie and Joy Lord, Pleasant Hill, TN
Bill Schorman, Pleasant Hill, TN
Betty and Len Stark, Pleasant Hill, TN

Elizabeth Clement, Director

WHAT CANCER CAN'T DO

Cancer is so limited ...
It cannot cripple love,
It cannot shatter hope,
It cannot corrode faith,
It cannot destroy confidence,
It cannot kill friendship,
It cannot shut out memories,
It cannot silence courage,
It cannot invade the soul,
It cannot reduce eternal life,
It cannot quench the Spirit.
It cannot lessen the power of the resurrection.

from *"The Courier,"*

Pleasant Hill Community Church, Pleasant Hill, Tennessee

Meet the Southeast Conference Minister Search Committee!

You will note that they are a diverse group of people. What do they have in common? They are active members of local churches who are committed to the Southeast Conference and United Church of Christ. They bring a collective wealth of experience to this task.

Erna Bryant currently serves on the Conference Board of Directors as Past Moderator for the Conference. Prior to that she served as Moderator of the Georgia-South Carolina Association and Chair of the Visions '91 Campaign which raised over \$200,000 for the Conference. With earned Masters and Doctoral degrees from Harvard University, this active laywoman has also served as the national treasurer for United Black Christians and currently serves on the national Ecumenical Partnership Committee.

Lawrence Calbert, Sr. is an Automation Analyst with the Internal Revenue Service. He and his family transferred to Atlanta from Louisville, Kentucky in 1986. Soon after their arrival, Larry agreed to take on the added responsibility of serving as pastor of Rush Memorial Church in Atlanta. He continued to carry these dual responsibilities in addition to serving as moderator of the Georgia-South Carolina Association.

Arthur Dailey is retired general traffic manager of West Point-Pepperell, Inc. Arthur is a past moderator of the East Alabama-West Georgia Association and a former member of the Conference Board of Directors. He has taught Sunday School for some 40 years and Bible Study for more than 30 years. After many years as a lay speaker, Arthur was licensed and currently serves as pastor of the First Congregational Christian Church, Alexander City, Alabama.

Barbara Everett has just completed a six-year term on the Executive Council of the United Church of Christ during which time she also chaired the Finance and Budget Committee, All-Church Offering Committee, and served as vice-chair of the Personnel Committee. She has served as moderator of the Alabama-Tennessee Association and the Southeast

Conference. Barbara, an administrator at the University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee, is co-chair of the Conference Search Committee.

Milton Hurst is a graduate of an historic American Missionary Association school, Talladega College. In addition to his responsibilities as an academic counselor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Milton also serves as pastor at First Congregational United Church of Christ, Talladega, Alabama. A member of the old Council for Christian Social Action, Milton also served as the moderator of the 12th General Synod of the United Church of Christ. It is not surprising that Milton is frequently asked to serve as parliamentarian for Conference and association meetings. Milton is co-chair of the Conference Search Committee.

James Myers, Pastor Emeritus of First Congregational Christian Church, Birmingham, Alabama, has also served as dean of Theology and president of Daniel Payne College. A former moderator of the Conference and current chair of Commission on Church and Ministry, James has served on the United Church Board for World Ministries and is currently an annuitant visitor for The Pension Boards, United Church of Christ. James received his Master of Divinity degree from Gammon Theological Seminary.

Holly Nelson is a board-certified fellow in the College of Chaplains and one of three chaplains serving the Vanderbilt Medical Center in Nashville, Tennessee. She has served on the Conference Board of Directors, and most recently as chair of the Conference Personnel Committee. Holly was a member for five years on the Alabama-Tennessee Association Church and Ministry Committee, four of those as chair. She received her Doctor of Ministry degree from Vanderbilt Divinity School.

Frederika "Ricky" Preacher is a long-time member of Central Congregational Church in Atlanta, Georgia ... from Junior High to the present to be exact. After a brief stint in teaching, following graduation from Oglethorpe University in Atlanta, she turned toward the corporate world and enjoyed a successful insurance career in the area of sales administration and bond claims. She is currently the administrative assistant for Central Church. Ricky lives with her sister, Pam, in a home they share in the Briarcliff/Clairmont section of DeKalb County, not too far from her son's home in north Atlanta.

Bill Tweed is an Auburn University graduate who has retired from two careers, one with the U.S. Army, and the other as purchasing manager for Durand Wayland, Inc. He is a charter member of the Retired Officers Association in LaGrange, Georgia. Bill is a past moderator of the East Alabama-West Georgia Association where he presently serves on its Church and Ministry Committee. Bill's most recent Conference leadership position was as a member of the Structure Committee.

Jan Witte has been a member of St. John's United Church in Cullman, Alabama for eighteen years. She currently serves on St. John's Church Council in addition to serving as a director of their Children's Fellowship and member of the Ladies' Handbell Choir. While most of the committee have grown families, Jan and her husband still have an active ten-year-old son at home. Jan also helps run the family printing business.

News from Back Bay ...

A few weeks ago I wrote an item on the threat of casino gambling to our state, and the danger of relying on any form of gambling to serve as the financial foundation for support of society. This past week I receive a letter for help from the Back Bay Mission of the UCC in Biloxi, Mississippi.

The letter had to do with the City of Biloxi taking (stealing?) BBM's property for development as an entrance (!) to the Imperial Palace Casino now under construction. Let us not be deceived about the power of gambling interests and the eagerness of political leaders to succumb, not after a long struggle, but with the willingness of an ally. Here are the details of the Biloxi situation. Please keep in mind that BBM is a religious institution whose ministry has met the needs of tens of thousands of suffering people over the decades.

On May 1, 1995, the City of Biloxi filed an eminent domain lawsuit seeking to take BBM property along Bayview Avenue and Caillavet Street. Five buildings will be bulldozed in order to widen two streets and make a grand entry for the casino.

On July 17, County Judge Danny Guice denied BBM's Motion to Dismiss and BBM has appealed to Mississippi Supreme Court.

On August 17-18, there was a hearing to establish compensation to be paid by the city to BBM. The appraiser for BBM testified that Mission

property before the taking was worth \$3,199,865 and the value after the taking would be only \$2,043,210; the difference of \$1,156,655 would be the just compensation due BBM. The jury verdict was that BBM should be paid \$514,000 for the land and nothing for the five buildings. The jury apparently believed that Imperial Palace Casino will pay BBM a fair price for the remaining, damaged property. However, it was the casino's unwillingness to offer a fair price that led the City to agree to seize the property through eminent domain. This decision will be appealed, too.

Several national groups have expressed an interest in filing briefs with the Supreme Court; everyone is concerned that a precedent may be established that permits courts to rule that health and human service programs operated by churches are not religious organizations under the law because they do not conduct regular Sunday morning services! This attitude coming at a time when many in government, Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich being the foremost voice, are chiding churches for not taking on more social service ministries to make up for government reductions. If they want the church to do this, then do not attack the church and force the church to waste valuable money on a gross injustice like taking property for an unfair price.

Hear this appeal: We are unable to use or rent our most valuable building because of the lawsuit. But we still have a monthly mortgage payment of \$2,188 to make. This unbalances a budget in a hurry! We desperately need financial help during this appeal process.

Back Bay Mission
868 Bayview Avenue
Biloxi, MS 39530

Mary Ann Ezell:

Mission Teacher in the Marshall Islands

"When I first arrived on Rongrong, a friend from the states sent me *Guideposts*. The reaction stunned me. The hunger for inspirational material was overwhelming ... 'May I have it next?' ... 'Will there be more coming?' ... These ministers in their quiet way were asking for help. The Marshallese are very kind, gentle people. They seldom request for

themselves. They do not demonstrate their emotions openly. Yet they have revealed their quiet excitement and appreciation upon receiving the smallest book or booklet. Books for children and students get the same response. There are knocks on my door at 7 a.m. requesting books and sometimes there are students sitting in my room reading for 2 and 3 hours. The ministers and teachers here at the High School have very little resource material ... and many of the books date back to the '60s ... there has not been an infusion of new material for a long time. Are there ministers and lay people that might have materials to share? Old and new are fine. Materials for all ages are needed. Thank you for any help you might be able to give."

If you send books, it is best to send them directly to Mary Ann so that she can catalogue them for easier access to the "readers." Mary Ann Ezell, Christian High School, Rongrong, P.O. Box 10, Majuro, Marshall Islands 96960.

Historians/Archivists Needed for Local Churches & Conferences

Every local church, association and conference in the UCC needs its own historian, archivist, or history/archives committee. Persons who volunteer for such positions should be interested in learning and writing about the history of the church, association or conference and be capable of detailed work such as putting minutes in order and listing them on an inventory.

Archival tasks often take place in dusty, musty areas, from which the records need to be rescued. Agonizing decisions are involved about what to keep and what to discard, and many hours can be spent identifying old photographs or deciphering baptismal records written in fading script or partially legible handwriting.

Help and guidelines are available from the UCC archives and the Congregational Christian and Evangelical and Reformed Historical Societies. We encourage you to join the ranks of those who have already volunteered for these essential positions and do your bit to preserve the history of our denomination.

For assistance, write to:

Congregational Christian Historical Society
14 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108
Phone: (617) 523-0470

Evangelical & Reformed Historical Society
UCC Archives
555 West James Street, Lancaster, PA 17603
Phone: (717) 290-8711

New Bible Available

"Hooray for the Son of David!" God bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hooray for God in heaven alone!"

So reads the joyous text of Matthew 21:9 in the Contemporary English Version, the newest translation of the Scriptures from the American Bible Society. The "Bible for Today's Family" New Testament was first printed in 1991. Now the complete Bible has just been published.

Bible Society Chief Translator, Barclay Newman and his wife Jean, are Missourians who have spent years in collaboration with the translation team and consultants from many denominations across the world preparing this wholly new translation, based upon the earliest manuscripts available.

Having a particular readability and clarity, the CEV is quickly becoming a favorite for youngsters and their families. You will be startled by this stark presentation of the Gospels which was designed not only to read silently, but also be heard aloud. It will "grab hold" of you quickly as you read again the stories of Christ. The Old Testament becomes equally arresting as you read and hear with new understanding, some of the oldest stories of God's interaction with humankind.

It is available at reasonable cost in quality hardback, paperback and flexible covers. A colorful children's edition contains pictures of favorite Bible stories.

Two Old Testament Scripture examples: "All those who truly respected the LORD and honored his name started discussing these things, and when God saw what was happening, he had their names written as a reminder in his book." Malachi 3:16

"The LORD your God wins victory after victory and is always with you. He celebrates and sings because of you, and he will refresh your life with his love." Zephaniah 3:17

Get ready for discovery, joy and delight when you read your new CEV!

FROM THE BOARD:

SEC Board of Directors' Actions:

September 22-23 Meeting at Central Church

1) Pressed the matter of encouraging more persons to apply for the Youth Program Coordinator.

2) Moved to set aside funds for new developing churches. Funds designated for leadership, supportive fellowship with other churches, and for the purchase of resources and expertise. At the next Board meeting, the Church Development Commission will provide dollar amounts for the above areas of programming. Also, criteria and measurable goals that have to be met for proceeding with a new church start.

3) Moved to act on the Carroll Heights Church building disposition. Consideration to be given to bringing the building up to code, selling the facility, extend a lease-purchase, and other such determinations that will stabilize our responsibility for the property and people using it, a Church of God organizing congregation.

4) Steve Parker, David Speno and Ed Mehlhaff authorized to attend a financial ministry gathering, sponsored by the Stewardship Council and to be held in Nashville on December 8-9.

5) The Board authorized sending \$250 to match UCBHM for the training of youth in Disaster Response. The date for the training is October 29.

6) The Board appointed the following persons to be the "agents" for each state in the Conference as it relates to financial matters (i.e., grant

mortgages). This action is in response to Federal law mandating “representatives” from each state in which our Conference has a connection. The persons appointed were Dick Sales, Charles Lord, Ed Mehlhaff, Larry Johnson and James Fields.

7) Board approved the Annual Meeting speakers and place of meeting. Keynoters are Dr. Mary Brueggemann and Dr. Allison Phillips. The place of meeting is at the University of the South, Sewanee, TN, May 31-June 2. The theme of the Annual Meeting is *“Room at God’s Table for All Children.”*

8) Moved to finance the Heart of Georgia Fellowship at Macon at a rate of \$500 per month until January 1, 1996. New determinations will then be made.

9) The 150th Anniversary of the American Missionary Association will be lifted up at the Annual Meeting. There will be special events to occur in our Conference in 1996 which will be announced later.

10) A team is being appointed for the implementation of the new Conference structure. Dick Sales was given a list of names to contact and finalize the team make-up.

11) At the time of the Board meeting, the future of the Conference Office location was still in a state of suspension. (As of 10-10-95, it appears we will be able to continue our present office space and location at perhaps a very slight increase in cost. This yet to be determined upon receipt of final lease contract.)

12) Conference Office support staffing decision by the Board is as follows: Nan Wright becomes a full-time assistant to the Conference Minister working from 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. She was applauded for her outstanding work. Satisfaction was also expressed regarding Betty Ann Daniell, and her working hours have been set at 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. All times are Eastern times. We believe this schedule will accommodate all of our congregations.

13) The Constitution Revision Committee is at work and will have the changes in place for the new structure by our January Board meeting and finally for presentation to the 1996 Annual Meeting.

1996 Iowa-Southeast

Work Camp Opportunity!

The Iowa-Southeast Conference Partnership Committee is sponsoring a work camp June 2-8, 1996 at Pilgrim Heights Campground, Montour, Iowa (@40 miles from Grinnell, where the Iowa Annual Meeting will be held). The work camp is being held the week between our annual meetings so campers who wish to attend both Southeast and Iowa annual meetings can easily do so. The Iowa folk plan to erect a new building at the camp next spring! This means campers can repair/clean-up existing buildings and grounds plus probably paint and finish a new building. Mert Fedderson and one other person from Iowa will attend our Annual Meeting to bring us greetings from the Iowa Conference.

Staffing:

The following was approved by the Board of Directors on 9/22/95, to be approved by UCC Executive Council in October:

STAFFING PROPOSAL:

The Southeast Conference and the United Church of Christ

RATIONALE:

In restructuring its way of being a conference capable of addressing its mission, the following priorities were adopted:

1. A geographically large conference requires special attention to collaboration and covenant. Clustering churches and gathering the body in regular "Faith Works!"-type meetings will improve the sense of mutuality.
2. Changes in the composition of the Board of Directors will enhance communication to and from the leadership and churches.
3. Reorganizing program bodies in line with the proposed new national setting structure and regionalizing programming with part-time staff will improve the economy of conference operation.

Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ is a geographically expansive conference which requires appropriate and adequate conference staff to respond to the local church's needs. The

isolation of pastors and churches dictates more on-staff presence. The potential of our Conference cannot be maximized without added personnel to react and proact in the facilitation of local churches' missions that impact the Southeast Conference through United Church Board for Homeland Ministries has moved us well along these past five years. This present proposal requests an added subsidy period of four years. Our consultation team is inclined to commit to no further subsidy, believing our Conference will have charted a self-support course by the end of the four-year partnership covenant.

COVENANT:

We request a four-year covenant in partnership with the Southeast Conference and its associations. The annual subsidy for the four-year period will be:

UNITED CHURCH BOARD FOR HOMELAND MINISTRIES	20,000
SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE	20,000
ASSOCIATIONS	12,000
TOTAL ANNUAL SUBSIDY	52,000

PROGRAM COMMENCEMENT:

The covenant will commence with the arrival of the new conference minister. The estimated time is mid-1996.

STAFFING:

(Persons who would serve as Generalists)

Three one-third-time portfolio persons to be deployed near center of area to be served. Clergy and/or laity with appropriate regard to representation of Conference make-up. Persons qualified to fulfill our goals of achieving more connectedness, growth in evangelism and stewardship, enlivening local church programming and creating a greater understanding and relationship to the United Church of Christ. Annual evaluations will be performed involving all parties of this covenant.

Financial Package:

Base salary, travel, health insurance	13,500
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Office and secretarial expenses, program materials	3,000
TOTAL PACKAGE	16,500

Other compensation:

Serve a congregation part-time; secular employment part-time; energetic retired person able to rely on pension funds.

JOB DESCRIPTION:

Accountable to the Conference Minister.

Meet regularly with the Conference Minister for support, planning, reporting.

Collaborate with the Conference Minister regarding crisis and conflicted situations.

Be a broker of resources: personnel and printed resources.

Provide regular training events in evangelism, stewardship, and Christian Education

Visit each congregation, or leaders of the congregation, once a year.

Provide a physical presence at ceremonial events: ordinations/installations, church anniversaries, etc.

Attend association meetings to represent Southeast Conference and provide input as needed.

Communicate necessary information to and from the local churches under your care.

Provide a written monthly report: where, who, what, when, results, etc.

The Conference Minister, the Board of Directors/Conference Council, and the Personnel Committee evaluate the program and address needs raised.

May this proposal find an affirmative response by all parties involved.

Southeast Conference participants in document preparation and consultation phone calls:

Dick Sales, Moderator

Erna Bryant, Past Moderator

Dave Speno, Treasurer

Steve Sterner, Structures Committee

Roy Bain, Structures Committee
Ed Mehlhaff, Interim Conference Minister
Lester Ariail, Past Treasurer
Truman Moore, Structures Committee Chair
Barbara Everett, Structures Committee

New Loan Policy Approved

On November 2, 1992, the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries Board of Directors approved a new loan policy to provide the lowest cost possible site and construction loans to our new local churches. As defined in the policy, there is a conference guaranty provision associated with each loan commitment. During 1993, the UCBHM began advancing site and construction loans with these favorable terms to new local churches. In accordance with the provision of the loan guaranty, first potential conference liability with respect to repayment of loans will occur during the year 2013.

Recognizing that there may be instances where a conference is unable to repay this obligation in its entirety, the UCBHM approved the establishment of an emergency fund. The amount of \$74,300 was set aside to accrue at an estimated 10% interest annually with a goal of achieving \$500,000 in reserve by 2013. Conferences will be an equal partner in the establishment of this fund.

A working group comprised of members of the Council of Conference Ministers on New Church Development and UCBHM staff formulated the draft of an emergency fund policy. A governing board will be established comprised of equal representation from conferences and the UCBHM. Conferences voting to participate in the emergency fund will be asked to contribute a base fee in the amount of \$3,000 by January 1, 1996. Additional contributions will be part of a loan fee in connection with each new loan.

The new loan policy has been approved by 22 conferences that are active in new church development. The remaining 17 conferences that have not acted on this policy are not currently actively engaged in new church development. However, conferences wishing to participate in the

benefits from the emergency fund are encouraged to apply prior to the January 1, 1996 deadline.

The SEC Board of Directors approved the new loan policy September 22, 1995.

Visions & Voices UCC Women to Meet

Excitement is building for the UCC Third National Meeting of Women. Women from around the UCC will gather at the Sheraton Hotel in Boston June 27-30, 1996. The theme for the meeting is "Visions and Voices."

Outstanding keynote speakers will address the approximately 2,000 women expected to attend. Barbara Ehrenreich is a nationally known author, essayist and columnist. One reviewer of her most recent book *The Snarling Citizen* says the book "showcases her talent for insight and howling funny social commentary." June Goudey, Assistant Professor of Practical Theology at Bangor Theological Seminary, and Imani-Sheila Newsome, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs at Boston University School of Theology, will co-facilitate reflections on women's theological perspectives.

Preachers for worship include Bernice Powell Jackson, Executive Director of the UCC Commission for Racial Justice, and Christine Smith, Associate Professor of Preaching and Worship at United Theological Seminary. Attendees will also have an opportunity to worship in local UCC churches. These will be services of healing. Our six women conference ministers will participate in these services. Storyteller and dramatist Valerie Tutson will be the Bible Study leader for the meeting. She has a reputation for raising people's sensitivities through her energetic and enthralling style and strives to see that audiences visualize the picture that she creates. Elaine Kirkland, well known as a gifted artist, will lead the music and community building for the event. Libana, an eight-woman ensemble from New England, will provide the meeting with an evening of uplifting festivity, sharing traditional and contemporary world music and dance from a uniquely women's perspective.

On Saturday evening, June 29, the meeting will be transformed into a bazaar, featuring UCC artisans and craftspeople from across the United

States and around the world displaying and selling their wares and gifted UCC performers offering entertainment.

Registration information is available from your conference office or contact: United Church of Christ, Third National Meeting of Women, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115. Phone: (216) 736-2154.

Prayer Response to Million Man March

The Executive Council of the United Church of Christ, in response to the Million Man March and President Clinton's expressions of concern regarding racism, calls its churches to a season of prayer by offering a prayer of Thanksgiving, Intercession and Call to Commitment as well as by asking every member to share in the hope and determination of those participants of the March as they left Washington at the end of the event. Prayer:

O God of Healing, Compassion and Justice, we call upon you and exalt your name. We thank you for creating this opportunity in the life of our nation where African American men came together to share a time of commitment, atonement and reconciliation before you and all the world. We thank you for giving thousands of African American men the courage to make the pilgrimage to Washington and begin their own healing and renewal. We thank you especially for the thousands of African American United Church of Christ men who joined their brothers in our nation's capital or were there in spirit. We thank you for giving the vision of the coming together of African American men in America to the leaders of the march. We confess that we have not prayed fervently enough, loved deeply enough or spoken passionately enough about the plight of our African American brothers. We commit ourselves, O God, to work to break down the barriers that continue to deny justice and the ability of African American families in America to thrive. We commit ourselves to work with African American men in order that their pledge to seek spiritual, moral, mental, social, political and economic health for themselves and their communities might become fulfilled. We affirm their journey and pray that all people of faith will embark on paths that lead to the wholeness of humankind. We commit ourselves as a people of faith to listen to voices of the poor and the oppressed and we call upon our nation to follow the

challenge of President Clinton to hear each other's pain so that we might choose "the path of courage and wisdom which leads to unity, reconciliation and a rich opportunity for all to make the most of the lives God has given them." We pray, Creator, for reconciliation with each other. In Christ's name we ask this. Amen.

Announcing

A Spring 1996 Tour of

American Missionary Association Colleges

*in celebration of the 150th anniversary
of the American Missionary Association*

April 12-20, 1996

Tour will include visits to:

DILLARD UNIVERSITY, New Orleans, Louisiana

FISK UNIVERSITY, Nashville, Tennessee

HUSTON-TILLOTSON COLLEGE, Austin, Texas

LeMOYNE-OWEN COLLEGE, Memphis, Tennessee

TALLADEGA COLLEGE, Talladega, Alabama

TOUGALOO COLLEGE, Tougaloo, Mississippi

Sponsored by:

The New England Conferences of the United Church of Christ

Council of Presidents of American Missionary Association Colleges

in cooperation with:

The United Church Board for Homeland Ministries

For information about the tour, including cost, please contact:

H. Daehler Hayes, Rhode Island Conference UCC, 56 Walcott Street,
Pawtucket, RI 02860; (401) 421-5633

James A. Smith, Jr., United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, 700
Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115; (216) 736-3787

C.O.R.A. Celebrates 30th Anniversary

The people of the Commission on Religion in Appalachia (CORA), commissioners, directors, workers, friends, supporters, staff, some 250 all told, came together at Cedar Lakes Center in Ripley, West Virginia for a three-day celebration of the 30th anniversary of CORA's establishment.

CORA was established in 1965 as an ecumenical ministry in the rural areas, towns and cities of the Appalachian region. Today there are 19 denominations and 16 ecumenical partners who work together in this ministry. The spectrum of efforts is broad, ranging from traditional food cupboards, through a host of projects that address social concerns in our country, to some creative efforts that are new challenges to help people help themselves.

The Appalachian Development Projects Coalition (ADPC) covers several dozen community groups who work for the improvement of their communities from New York State down into Mississippi. It is noteworthy that 14 of these groups are within the bounds of the Southeast Conference and they are scheduled to receive \$136,325 in financial support in 1996. These are grassroots people who help with training, funding and networking to generate vision, hope and encouragement. Some of the types of ministry include: women's justice, coal miners/black lung justice, Native American issues, environment, establish small businesses, organic farming, education, safety and health issues, parenting/healthy family.

Churches are enlisted in Cooperative Congregational Development (CCD), designed to help strengthen local congregations to meet the spiritual needs of the people in their communities. Appalachian Ministries Educational Resources Center (AMERC) is a leadership training program designed to help the lay preachers, licensed preachers, ordained clergy and lay leaders cultivate the skills needed to best lead the churches they serve. AMERC is an academic experiential program based in Berea, Kentucky.

There is an extensive volunteer program that enables people to take on short-term or extended periods of volunteer service in a variety of settings, e.g., cottage industry, youth camp leaders and child care center

staff. It was estimated that the volunteers contributed over \$1 million in actual funds and in-kind labor during 1994.

The immediate past chair of the board of directors was the Rev. Paul Peters, UCBHM, American Missionary Association Division. The current president is the Rev. Paul Westcoat, Jr., Conference Minister, Penn West Conference. The Executive Coordinator is Tina Willemsma.

The story of CORA is punctuated with powerful terms: enterprise, development, economics, self-help, co-op, locally-owned-and-operated, investment in community. The one word that permeates everything is pride. People who felt worthless and helpless in the face of oppression come to life, take on the flow of vitality and courage, and are eager to work for improvement of the quality of their communities and themselves. They believe the good news of Christ, that all are precious in the eyes of God and deserving of a share of creation's riches.

As with every ministry of the church, there is a great need for funds. CORA has almost no financial reserves. Plans are underway to conduct a capital campaign to raise \$1.75 million to expand the services, improve the offices and build a small endowment. Retired Episcopal bishop William Sanders, Knoxville, TN, is chairperson. You may wish to contact CORA for printed material or to make contributions for outreach ministry. It is well worth your time to learn CORA's story.

CORA's main office is quartered in the facilities of the Church of the Savior, 864 Weisgarber Road N.W., P.O. Box 52910, Knoxville, TN 37950-2910. Telephone: (423) 584-6133.

Edward Schneider
UCC Commissioner

Youth From Four Conferences Visit Southeast Conference

This past summer youth groups from four conferences in Wisconsin, Illinois, Nebraska and Penn Southeast spent a week at Uplands Retirement Village in Pleasant Hill, Tennessee. This year's campers were from First Congregational UCC in Rhinelander, WI; First Congregational in Decatur,

IL; First Central Congregational of Omaha, NE; and First UCC in Hamburg, PA.

Each year Uplands Retirement Village is the site chosen by various churches for a summer youth camp experience. A typical week consists of work on the 500 acres of grounds, assisting residents with yard or house work, and building residents who provide a wealth of history and experience. Breaks during the work schedule provide time for fun at nearby parks and recreational facilities.

To learn more about youth camp possibilities at Uplands Retirement Village, contact the administrative office at (615) 227-3518.

Celebrate Faith & Arts Atlanta

You are invited to be a part of the CELEBRATE FAITH & ARTS ATLANTA festival during the 1996 Centennial Summer Olympic Games. Seventeen downtown congregations, representing three faiths and eight Christian denominations have joined together to serve witness to the world of a community of faith joined to celebrate faith expressed through the arts.

Located along the downtown Atlanta Olympic pedestrian corridors, these congregations present a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for artists and groups from Atlanta, the nation and the world, to display their talents and faith to hundreds of thousands of guests and visitors. During the 17-day period of the Olympic Games (July 19 – August 4) and the 10-day period of the Paralympics (August 16 – 25), the CELEBRATE FAITH & ARTS ATLANTA congregations will open their doors and make the facilities available to artists and groups wishing to be a part of this incredible opportunity. Concerts, recitals, exhibits, architectural tours, readings and more will be held.

A Kick-off event is scheduled as well as a closing event. A special directors listing event times, locations and artists will be printed and distributed throughout the city via the Quest Atlanta '96 church network and the Atlanta HOST/AT&T partnership.

CELEBRATE FAITH & ARTS ATLANTA is planning to schedule 340 cultural events over the 17 days of the Summer Games, and we need you to be a part of the program! Choirs, soloists, organists, musicians,

photographers, painters, sculptors, poets, writers, street performers, mimes, jugglers and more will make up the events of CELEBRATE FAITH & ARTS ATLANTA. Anyone who expresses or celebrates his or her faith through an artistic medium is invited to join us!

For more information and an application, call (404) 524-6614 or (404) 867-2253. Application forms are also available at the Southeast Conference office. Deadline for applications is December 31, 1995.

Litany of the Circle

Leader: Every part of this earth is sacred.

ALL: Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore.

Leader: Every mist in the dark woods.

ALL: Every clearing and humming insect is holy.

Leader: The rocky crest, the juices of the meadow, the beasts and all the people,

ALL: All belong to the same family.

Leader: Teach your children that the earth is our mother.

ALL: Whatever befalls the earth befalls the children of the earth.

Leader: The water's murmur is the voice of our father's father.

ALL: We are part of the earth, and the earth is part of us.

Leader: The rivers are our brother; they quench our thirst.

ALL: The perfumed flowers are our sisters.

Leader: The air is precious,

ALL: For all of us share the same breath.

Leader: The wind that gave our grandparents breath also receives their last sigh.

ALL: The wind gave our children the spirit of life.

Leader: This we know, the earth does not belong to us;

ALL: We belong to the earth.

Leader: This we know, all things are connected.

ALL: Like the blood which unites one family.

Leader: All things are connected.

ALL: Our God is the same God, whose compassion is equal for all.

Leader: For we did not weave the web of life;

ALL: We are merely a strand in it,

Leader: Whatever we do to the web

ALL: We do to ourselves.

Leader: Let us give thanks for the web and the circle that connects us.

ALL: Thanks be to God, the God of all. Amen.

Announcing: **CONSULTATION II**

Transforming The Church:

Empowering the People of God for Mission and Ministry

A Bi-National Ecumenical Consultation on the

Emerging Leadership Needs of the Church in the 21st Century

March 10 to 13, 1996

Scarritt-Bennett Center

Nashville, Tennessee

PURPOSE: To claim, strengthen and celebrate the partnership in ministry of the whole People of God, empowering all for transforming leadership in the Church and servant witness in the world.

By: Examining the criteria for leadership; examining new models for mission and ministry; and examining models of education and training.

LEADERSHIP: Dr. Douglas John Hall, recently retired from McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada; Rev. Marjorie Suchocki, School of Theology at Claremont, Claremont, CA; third keynoter, pending

WORKSHOPS: Several creative models of mission and ministry involving the laity in ministry will be highlighted. Also models for education

and training of laity for transforming
leadership will be examined.

REGISTRATION FEE: \$175.00

Registration brochure and further details will be mailed on or about
November 1, or contact us for additional information.

Missouri School of Religion Center for Rural Ministry

P.O. Box 104685

Jefferson City, Missouri 65110-4685

(314) 635-1187, 1-800-626-5924, FAX: (314) 635-0591

For Our Life Together

"We are a Covenant Church. That means that our relationships to one another as parts of the Church – Congregation, Association, Conference, and General Synod – are based not on coercion or laws, but rather on a mutual union of wills.

"It means that no part of the Church is above another or can legislate for it or speak for it. Our structure is not pyramidal or hierarchical. But we must quickly go on to say that all parts of the Church are under a higher authority, and that is the Word of God. That is what we mean by autonomy. It is not to be seen as a negative doctrine, that is, 'nobody can tell us what to do.' It is positive in the sense that every part of the Church is under the obligation to determine for itself what God wants it to do at a particular time and in a particular place. Perhaps the words, 'theonomy' or 'christonomy' would be preferable.

"We have learned that the Covenant style of life requires consultation, simply because a decision made by one part affects the whole. We, therefore, do not make our decisions in isolation from one another, but in the context of the fullest consultation."

June 15, 1973

Rev. Dr. Robert V. Moss

Late President, United Church of Christ (1969-76)

Letters to the Editor: Atlanta Journal

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Two recent public events seem to have divided the American People. The trial of O. J. Simpson and the Million Man March on Washington seem to have rubbed salt into some longstanding wounds. I want to suggest a focus that could unite us and concentrate on making the world a safe place for all of God's children.

All the major living religions hold two truths in common: 1) Belief in God, and 2) Being a good neighbor. When conflicts confront us we should not see them as battles to be won or lost but problems to be solved. If we truly believe the above stated truths we would behave like functional atheists when trials and tribulations assail us. Come let us reason together. That is the counsel of holy writ. The minds of all of us are better than the mind of any one of us. Surely not one of us believes in immaculate perception! Every person's thinking is flawed. That's the nature of the clay out of which we are made. Let's recognize this truth and engage in the miracle of dialogue which can birth the new to guide us into a future that makes room for all at God's table.

I want to invite all of us to remember whose we are and therefore who we are. The loud voices that would stir up the ugly spirits in us must not be heeded. We must listen to and work with the many who are quietly being good neighbors, who seek to upbuild the neighbor, who do not deal deceptively with people but who labor in good will for the peace of all. The issues of life are not decimal points and economics but spiritual. If we view each other as God's creation we will respond with acts of care and kindness. Central to all living religions is this principle for living: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Can we move from preaching this to practicing it?

"As a man thinketh (in his heart) so shall he be." "The longest journey in the world is from the head to the heart." My own faith invites me to be as light and salt. These are quiet agents of change that make a difference. To be light is to be present with love where hate is, to be present with truth where lies are told, to be present with a spirit of family where racism and bigotry abound, to be present with possessions where want abounds, to be present with words and deeds of justice where injustice abounds, and to care about people more than about things. To be salt is to touch life for its enhancement, to upbuild and not destroy the

good, to preserve life and make it palatable for all! In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, "The Church (all living religions) is too often a taillight instead of a headlight." Religion has the calling and power to set a moral and ethical tone that is able to heal divisions and brokenness. We have our directives in print, our challenge is to practice our proclamations.

I for one am committed to the worship of God and being a good neighbor. Come, let us reason together! The best way to bring another a gift is to wrap it in a person. Let us come together with the gift of love and go to our neighbor with that gift of love. Love and justice are the same side of a coin. Love and justice is sharing the power. The future will not abide our divisions. We are all shackled as long as one of us is shackled.

The Rev. Edwin Mehlhaff
Interim Conference Minister
Southeast Conference
United Church of Christ

Habitat for Humanity & the Church

Here are some statistics on the United Church of Christ's participation in the Habitat for Humanity enterprise. The denomination has contributed \$732,167.22 and built 818 houses. That is quite a good record. Thanks to all who have worked and contributed funds!

What does a Habitat Partnership mean?

1) Observe the International Day of Prayer and Action for Human Habitat.

2) Establish a house building campaign.

3) House sponsorship. Adopt a home building.

4) Blitz building.

5) Housing resolution.

6) Challenge grants.

7) House building in developing countries.

For further information, contact Clifton E. Buckrham, Sr., D. Min., at Habitat for Humanity, P.O. Box 58187, Raleigh, NC 27658-8187. Phone: (919) 834-7334.

National Youth Event!

'96 UPDATE!!!

The site for NYE '96 is the University of South Carolina in Columbia, SC, and the dates are July 25-29, 1996. your church should have received a poster with this information. If not, please request another poster.

Youth participants must be between the ages of 12-18 years of age. They cannot have graduated from high school at the time of the event. We will be unable to provide child care at this event.

Contact your conference office or General Synod group to combine and coordinate your efforts with other groups. Registration materials will be sent out in early November. Additionally, upon registering, you will receive more information about: youth and adults covenant/rules on behavior at NYE '96; and, information and forms for screening of adult leaders.

For additional information, call Gordon J. Svoboda at (216) 736-3789.

An Invitation

Human Identity & Sexuality Training
coming January 18-20, 1996.

Churches of the Southeast Conference
are invited to send a team of 3 or more persons
to be trained to use the new
Human Identity/Sexuality
curriculum in your church.

The event will be led by
Faith Johnson and Gordon Svoboda
of the Board for Homeland Ministries
at Central Congregational UCC, Atlanta.

AROUND THE CONFERENCE:

Church & People Notes

SEC churches were quick to respond to victims of Hurricane Opal in the Florida Conference. Central, Pilgrimage, Trinity, Duncan's Creek and Southwest Congregational were among those who called the Conference Office to determine what might be needed.

Brookmeade Congregational has 2nd-year Vanderbilt M.Div. student Kim Magwire now serving as pastor intern focusing on pastoral care.

Atlanta Good Shepherd Community Church celebrated its third anniversary Sunday, October 29, Atlanta, Rev. Richard S. Bright, pastor. Message, Rev. Michael A. Pace, Union Grove Baptist Church, Union City; Choir, Pilgrimage United Church of Christ, Marietta.

In 1993, Pilgrimage Church received a grant from the American Missionary Association in order to fund a summer intern program in which the church hires one of its youth to work eight weeks in various non-profit agencies. Joel Morrison, this year's intern, had a summer rich in experiences at several of our mission agencies.

Ralph Galt has returned from his 3-week visit to his homeland in China. Ralph (80 years young) is a member of Pleasant Hill.

Dan and Emily Byrens have returned from Silliman University, Dumaguete City, the Philippines, where they have been teaching for three years.

Our Uplands friends, Frances Thomason, Virginia McKinley, and her late husband, Jim McKinley, spent their lifetime mission careers at Silliman University in the Philippines. The Divinity School classroom building has been named McKinley Hall in honor of Jim.

The Huntsville UCC celebrated its 35th anniversary September 30-October 1. Rev. James Norris is currently serving as pastor. Previous pastors who were present are the Revs. Allen Hollis, Eugene Keen, and Ray Berry. Rev. Edwin Mehlhaff, Interim Conference Minister, preached. It was a great celebration and a wonderful weekend. May their next 35 years be glorious!

Mr. & Mrs. Jim Walker's son (Cullman) had an aneurysm removed. He is home and recovering nicely.

Nancy Donny, pastor, Columbia Fellowship, had cancer surgery in June and is receiving radiation treatment.

Marvin Morgan's brother, Donald, pastor in New Iberia, Louisiana, was shot early in October as he was closing his convenience store. Fortunately, he has made a complete recovery.

Dona Mehlhaff's sister, Lenore Huey, has been hospitalized in California in serious condition from a stroke.

Bob Sherard is receiving radiation treatment for liver and pancreatic cancer. He is at home in Savannah.

Gene Keen continues to make good progress after his hospital stay.

Leonore Whiteman, wife of Glen, had cancer surgery.

Floyd Carmack is continuing his struggle with spinal problems.

Carol Dollar, wife of J. C., has been having kidney stone attacks.

****Our Sympathy****

To the Ed Schneiders, who experience the deaths of two persons that were very close to their hearts. An aunt and godchild died within days of each other in Baltimore, MD.

To Mary and Walter Brueggemann on the death of Mary's mother, Dr. Lila Miller, who died Sept. 23rd at the age of 95.

Bill Chew, past moderator for AL-TN Association, had surgery Tuesday, Oct. 4th. He is doing well.

David Chandler, pastor at Pilgrim Church in Birmingham, 1984-1986, died in Hallandale, Fla. 10/24/95. Heartfelt sympathy to those who loved and will miss David.

Evalee Schofield, wife of John D. Schofield, former pastor of Langdale Congregational Christian Church of Valley, AL, died of a massive stroke, 8/24/95.

John D. Schofield died of cancer, 9/2/95.

CONFERENCE CALENDAR

November 1995

23-24 THANKSGIVING! OFFICE CLOSED

December 1995

1 World AIDS Day
8-10 National UCC meeting on financial ministry – Nashville –
Attendees will be Steve Parker, Robert Kurtz, & Ed Mehlhaff.
11 Begin Just Peace Appeal promotion
18 First Day of Hanukkah
21 Conference staff meeting
22-28 Dona and Ed to visit their Houston home and children
24 Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross
25-26 CHRISTMAS! OFFICE CLOSED

January 1996

1 NEW YEAR'S DAY! OFFICE CLOSED
6 Epiphany
12-13 Conference Minister Search Committee meeting –
Birmingham
15 MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY – OFFICE CLOSED
18 Begins Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
19-20 Board of Directors Meeting – Sewanee, TN
21 Ecumenical Sunday
22 First day of Ramadan

February 1996

- 2-3 Conference Minister Search Committee meeting – Birmingham
- 4 Begins UCC Women’s Week
- 8-13 Council of Conference Ministers meeting
- 11 Race Relations Sunday
- 14 Valentine’s Day
- 21 Ash Wednesday
- 23-25 Conference Minister Search Committee meeting – Atlanta
- March 1996
- 1 World Day of Prayer
- 15-16 SEC Board of Directors meeting – Simpsonwood
- 17 One Great Hour of Sharing All-Church Offering

“BOOKS & BICYCLES PROJECT”

The “Word Among Us” class of First United Church, UCC in Belvidere, TN ventured into new territories when it adopted the “Books and Bicycles Project” for the 1994/1995 Christian Education Year. It involved a commitment of (at least) \$1.00 per week per class member/couple above regular offerings to be used by UCBWM missionaries, Carol and Larry Gilley in Maxixe, Mozambique, Africa. (Pastor Karl K. Whiteman met the Gilleys at the UCBWM meeting, “Faith Works” at Purdue University last [1994] summer and a friendship was formed). The Gilleys’ work includes training new pastors for the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA). Before the Gilleys returned to Mozambique in November 1994, the class set up a speaker-phone conversation for all involved so voices could be put with faces and to hear first-hand about the Gilleys’ work.

The “Books & Bicycles Project” provides a Bible, Hymnbook, several Bible reference books, and basic Christian Education materials to the new pastors (cost, \$50) along with a bicycle (cost, \$150) that is used by them to travel the distances between the congregations they serve (6 or more per pastor). The class, which is taught by Dr. Thomas Zimmerman and Mrs. Jan Whiteman, was able to provide \$410.00.

For the 1995/1996 year, the class has chosen to collect funds along with children’s books (grades 3-9) for UCBWM/DOM volunteer missionary

Mary Ann Ezell, who is serving at Rongrong Christian High School in the Marshall Islands. Mary Ann is a member of the United Church of Huntsville, AL.

The "Word Among Us" class of First United Church, UCC in Belvidere, TN encourages other groups in local congregations to contact the UCBWM Corporation members in their conference to help identify other projects where they can get involved in global ministry, on the local level.

For more information, contact the Rev. Mr. Karl K. Whiteman, First United Church, UCC, 4099 Owl Hollow Rd., Belvidere, TN 37306-2611. Phone: (615) 967-0380 or 967-0180.

THE SOUTHEAST NEWS

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